United Nations A/S-30/PV.4

General Assembly
Thirtieth special session

Official Records

4th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 20 April 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lykketoft ..... (Denmark)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Urmas Reinsalu, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Estonia.

Mr. Reinsalu (Estonia): We should have no illusions. The social problem that drugs present is growing, not decreasing. Our shared approach should react robustly to the modern trends around this threat. We should focus more on the sale and trafficking of drugs over the Internet and on the rise of new psychoactive substances. Global drug policy should send a clear and consistent signal that profiting from drug use is against the core principles of human dignity. The fact that drugs are spreading is no reason to support the notion that drugs should be a normal and accepted part of the future of humankind. Our moral stand should be that drugs are not a normal aspect of individual liberty and choice. Far from it — we must understand their risks and dangers and see them as a fast route to the total destruction of personal will. I believe that the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) that we adopted yesterday is an important step forward in that regard.

Estonia fully aligns itself with the common European Union position on this issue. At the United Nations we have focused on supporting human rights, and I would therefore like to express my regret about our failure to move forward on the abolition of the death penalty and other inhumane punishments for drug offences.

Estonia is on one of Europe's drug-trafficking routes. In 2014, my Government adopted a new drug-prevention policy. To be honest, the problems we face are extensive and complex. We have way too many injecting drug users and one of the highest rates of drug-overdose deaths in Europe. We have reason to be angry about that situation and to take a firm and honest policy stance on it.

Our first priority is prevention, and in recent years the Government has therefore dramatically increased its investment in that. We focus on evidence-based measures aimed at children, families and schools, and we must continue to work on such prevention. The second pillar of our approach is harm reduction. We have launched programmes for needle exchange, methadone substitution treatment, naloxone programmes and counselling services. We believe that reducing harm benefits all of us and damages no one. The third pillar is treatment. We have a long way to go in that regard. We have changed our laws to provide alternatives to incarceration and treatment for those who need it, and we are now working to ensure that there are enough quality treatment services all over the country.

Law enforcement also has an important role to play in our drug policy. The Government expects the police to focus on organized crime and on reducing the availability of the most dangerous types of drugs. The State should provide help when it is needed and mete out harsh punishment when it is justified. Our approach in

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the future will be smart about measures, proportionate towards users and tough on organizers.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Paiboon Koomchaya, Minister of Justice of the Kingdom of Thailand.

Mr. Koomchaya (Thailand) (*spoke in Thai; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): At the outset, Thailand would like to thank the General Assembly for convening this special session on the world drug problem, which recognizes the importance of international cooperation in addressing that global issue.

We commend the role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the central United Nations policymaking body for international drug control. We support the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in coordinating and integrating international cooperation to ensure the effective implementation of international drug-control policy, and of the International Narcotics Control Board in monitoring implementation of the three international drug conventions.

Thailand also welcomes our adoption yesterday of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), which was the subject of intensive consultations among Member States, including Thailand. We reiterate our commitment to ensuring the effective implementation of the three drug-control conventions. We adhere to a balanced approach that includes reducing both demand and supply.

Thailand aligns itself with the position of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on this issue. We do not agree with legalizing illicit drugs, since there are other measures available, or with decriminalizing serious offences. At the same time, we believe that drug users should receive treatment and rehabilitation, not incarceration, and we promote implementation of the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders, the Bangkok Rules.

Thailand promotes the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development, and we recognize the nexus between alternative development and the Sustainable Development Goals. Integrating alternative development programmes into national development plans and strategies should therefore be encouraged. Alternative development can also be applicable in urban settings and can help address socioeconomic problems.

The Royal Thai Government reaffirms its unwavering determination and commitment to countering the drug problem in the Golden Triangle, which is one of the world's largest sources of illicit drug production and affects other regions. The problem of the illicit trafficking of precursor chemicals in the Golden Triangle is one of my priorities. I urge the countries of origin to focus on the problem and work together to solve it. We have established joint cooperation in the greater Mekong subregion under our Safe Mekong Operation Plan, expediting subregional, national and operational action plans to counter the illicit trafficking of drugs and their precursors. The Safe Mekong Operation has yielded positive results, and I am grateful to the Governments of China, Myanmar, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Viet Nam and Cambodia for their strong commitment to and support for it. I also thank the Government of Australia and the UNODC for their continued cooperation and support in that regard.

Lastly, Thailand is ready to work with the international community to mitigate the risk posed by the world drug problem. Such efforts are based on the principle of common and shared responsibility and partnerships. I would be more than happy to see potential donor countries and international organizations engage with the countries of South-East Asia in the fight against the world drug problem.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Juras Požela, Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania.

Mr. Požela (Lithuania): It is a pleasure to join you, Mr. President, and the other speakers here today. Lithuania considers this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem an important opportunity for the international community to review what has been achieved and assess what remains to be done in order to effectively address the world drug problem. Lithuania, together with all the European Union (EU) member States, has therefore been extensively engaged in the preparatory process for the special session, providing contributions and defining our common position.

We fully align ourselves with the statement delivered previously on behalf of the European Union and its member States (see A/S-30/PV.1).

While recognizing the progress that has been made towards solving the world drug problem, Lithuania regrets the fact that it remains a major challenge for the international community and will continue to require increased and effective bilateral, regional and international cooperation, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility. We also believe that we must ensure effective cooperation among all the relevant United Nations entities if we are to develop an effective drug policy oriented towards human rights and public health and based on scientific evidence and best practices.

Drug use is a public-health issue. There is a need for improved understanding of addiction to go with the growing recognition that it is a chronic but treatable multi-factor health disorder, and that is why we should base our drug policies on a balanced approach focused on human rights and public health. We must put people first when developing responses. We also have to ensure that a broad range of drug-demand-reduction services can provide approaches that serve vulnerable groups and are differentiated, based on scientific evidence, so that they can best respond to the varying needs of those groups.

We totally agree with the importance of ensuring better implementation of the provisions of the existing drug-control treaties and political declarations and of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, resulting in a balanced, comprehensive and integrated approach in which health and welfare are at the core of drug-control policy, human rights are promoted and the principle of proportionality is applied. Lithuania is convinced that success depends on the political will and ability of States to implement evidence-based policies and practices in line with the conventions. Under the drug-control conventions, States parties are committed to ensuring that access to controlled narcotic and psychotropic substances for the relief of pain and suffering is not unduly restricted, while recognizing the need to prevent abuse, misuse and diversion.

Lithuania strongly believes that human rights are an integral part of any response to the drug problem. We therefore believe that using the death penalty for drug-related offences is contrary to international law and the spirit of the United Nations drug-control conventions. Like all the European Union member States, Lithuania regrets that prohibition of the death penalty for drug-related offences has so far been excluded from the special session's outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), despite continued calls from the EU and several States, United Nations agencies and civil society organizations.

We are now facing numerous new challenges, such as new psychoactive substances, new trends in illicit production and trafficking routes. We are also seeing the rapid evolution of a new market, the sale and purchase of drugs through the Internet. The misuse of legal medicines is spreading in many countries. In our view, such challenges to a solution to the world drug problem require a cooperative response from all stakeholders, at the national, regional and international levels. Given the strong links between supply and demand, it is important that the justice and health sectors collaborate on the issues.

We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the importance of engaging civil society and the scientific community in the development, implementation and evaluation of drug demand-reduction policies, at both the national and international levels. At this special session, Lithuania is proud to be officially represented by several representatives of non-governmental organizations participating as part of the Lithuanian delegation.

This special session is a significant opportunity for all of us to develop and implement science- and evidence-based drug policies, promoting evidence-based prevention, public health interventions — including treatment and risk- and harm-reduction measures — and proportionate sentencing, as well as to strengthen operational cooperation against organized crime. The research evidence shows clearly that harm-reduction approaches are beneficial to health, because they prevent overdoses and the transmission of diseases such as HIV and hepatitis B and C. They are also highly effective for reducing criminality rates in communities. Lithuania has therefore been taking a leading role in spreading knowledge and expertise on modern harm reduction and biological, psychological and social treatment approaches for addicts and families affected across the region.

The road to the thirtieth special session has been a long one, and the hard work is not over. We all are committed to working to achieve our shared objectives in addressing the world drug problem through strengthened national, regional and international cooperation. We in Lithuania intend to carefully study the new ideas that have been incorporated into the

outcome document and consider the conclusions we can draw nationally and the changes we should introduce into our drug-control policies.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sohn Mungi, Minister of Food and Drug Safety of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Sohn Mungi (Republic of Korea): It is a great honour for me to address this special session, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone here for making the event possible.

The international community has been deeply committed to countering the world drug problem, starting with the adoption in 2009 of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, and meaningful progress has been made since then. The scope of discussions has expanded and has extended beyond simply focusing on controlling perpetrators. The new approach is more proactive and balanced, reaching out to vulnerable members of society such as women and children and promoting education and social welfare.

Despite such advances and the continued efforts of the United Nations and the international community, we are constantly facing new challenges and threats. For example, illegal drug trafficking through the Internet is widespread and on the rise. Narcotics prescribed for medical use are being abused, and new psychotropic substances are proliferating. In particular, drug trafficking on the Internet has soared. The cross-border nature of Internet drug trafficking makes it extremely difficult for any one country to address the problem unilaterally. It is my great hope that this special session can serve as an opportunity to discuss and make progress towards a specific cooperation scheme aimed at combating such traffic.

As for the abuse of medical narcotics, it is important for us to prevent it while at the same time supporting their proper use. To that end, we have developed a system in Korea, based on information technology infrastructure, designed to monitor the medical use of narcotics from start to finish. The system enables us to track permitted uses of such drugs from manufacturing to distribution and even to the prescription level. We look forward to sharing our experience and knowledge, as well as providing technical assistance, in that regard.

Korea is more committed than ever to assisting the international community in effectively addressing the world drug problem. We will continue to work closely with the international community as a reliable partner on our journey towards sustainable development, peace and humanity.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Makei, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus.

Mr. Makei (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): In 2009, with the adoption of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, we marked the transition to a more coordinated strategic approach to combating that problem against a backdrop of increasingly interdependent global processes. We value the activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Narcotics Control Board aimed at enhancing international cooperation on this issue.

Belarus, for its part, is a party to all three anti-drug conventions, and is fully committed to the principles of the 2009 Political Declaration. We have created a robust institutional base enabling us to conduct a targeted and uncompromising fight against the illicit trade in drugs and psychotropic substances. In the past few years we have adopted additional measures that have enabled us to ban for all practical purposes the distribution of new psychoactive drugs.

Nonetheless, however effective State measures may be, one of the greatest obstacles to the spread of drugs may be their complete rejection by society, and in order to achieve that we have to create corresponding attitudes. We therefore believe that we must anchor the fight against the spread of drugs by supporting the family, as the basic social institution and one that plays a vital part in bringing up and educating children and young people.

Despite the limited amount of progress that has been made at the global level in combating illicit drug trafficking, the problem has, unfortunately, been contained rather than solved. In that regard, I would like to focus on two points. First, drugs are closely interlinked with other transnational threats such as terrorism, human trafficking and money laundering. It is therefore clear that achieving success against any one of those challenges depends on making overall progress in addressing all of them. We are confident that we can

find a solution to that difficult task, and we have a good tool for it in the form of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1).

Secondly, we are concerned about the recent accelerating trend in the appearance of new psychoactive substances that are not prohibited by the founding conventions but whose consumption produces effects as powerful as those of traditional drugs. In that regard, I would like to note the comprehensive resolution on the issue initiated by Australia, Belarus and the United States of America and adopted at the recent fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. I firmly believe that implementing the resolution will help us to find effective ways of countering the phenomenon of new psychoactive substances.

In conclusion, I hope that our meeting will give new impetus to the efforts to counter the world drug problem.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Jesús Gracia Aldaz, Vice-Minister for International Cooperation and Iberoamerica of the Kingdom of Spain.

Mr. Aldaz (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Before laying out Spain's position on the issue we are here to discuss, I would like to express our full agreement with the statement delivered yesterday by Mr. Mimica on behalf of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1).

I would like to begin by emphasizing the Spanish Government's firm belief in the full validity and usefulness of the three United Nations drug-control conventions, both in safeguarding the health and welfare of our peoples and in establishing an effective regime concerning the use of narcotics and psychotropic substances solely for medical and scientific purposes. We see the conventions as constituting an international legal framework that when interpreted with reasonable flexibility can continue to play the key role in the issue of drugs that the international community has assigned to it.

Based on our assessment of these international standards and provisions, Spain advocates an approach balanced between reducing both the supply of drugs and the demand for them, with the international cooperative efforts aimed at achieving that goal being conducted on a basis of common and shared responsibility between producing, transit and consumer countries.

Based on all of this, I also believe that we must strengthen the provisions of the three basic conventions by interpreting them in the light of other United Nations instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 3, which provides for strengthening the prevention of substance use, including drug abuse and the treatment of health problems associated with tobacco use.

In remaining consistent with the objectives of sustainable development and as the person responsible for my country's cooperation in the international arena, I am pleased to note that Spain is fully committed to the Goals and is developing cooperation programmes with other multilateral and national partners, such as the Cooperation Programme between Latin America and the European Union on Drug Policies, that help to promote development to provide alternatives to those affected by the cultivation of cannabis, cocaine or opium poppies. We know that poverty and the lack of moral values and hope among young people greatly contribute to sustaining and strengthening drug trafficking.

I wish to underscore that in Spain, we attach great importance to the search for alternative development policies for populations that produce precursors to narcotics. Such development must go beyond the mere eradication of crops. However, authentic, in-depth and sustainable development requires strengthened legal and institutional mechanisms of the rule of law. Only through the practices of good governance will corruption — promoted by drug-trafficking networks as a way of perverting democracy and impoverishing people so as to better subjugate them to their interests — be eradicated. Furthermore, it is our conviction that, as with every development policy, women also play a primary role in that regard, being as they are in many instances the core of the family and the ones who bear the responsibility for caring for children exposed to the harmful effects of drug use.

That observation brings me back to my earlier reference to the link between the conventions of the United Nations and the principles of human rights. Spain, which unconditionally defends the abolition of the death penalty, believes that policies to combat drug trafficking must be subject to stricter respect for human rights and that in all cases, as stated in the final outcome document of this special session (resolution S-30/1, annex), which has brought us together, penalties for drug trafficking must in all cases be proportionate to the crimes committed. In that vein and in line with

the statement and explanation of position on the death penalty made on behalf of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1), I regret that the final outcome document does not contain a reference to the death penalty. Likewise, I call again on countries that still apply the death penalty for drug-related crimes to consider a moratorium on its use as a way to advance its abolition.

Under the rubric of human rights I also include public- health policies, which must provide comprehensive assistance aimed at prevention, treatment and reducing the damage caused by drug use or related illnesses — a situation paralleled by the AIDS pandemic and its remediation. In the 1980s and 1990s, Spain played a pioneering role in taking action aimed at harm reduction, thanks to which we succeeded in overcoming the scourge of heroin that was then afflicting us. In the light of that experience, Spain supports such measures, even in unusual circumstances that may occur in other countries, such as prison policies that include not only alternative prison sentences served outside of prison, but also the treatment of prison inmates addicted to drugs in order to effect their full rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

On the other hand, we must not ignore the perverse connections between drug networks and terrorist organizations in seeking their mutual benefit. Other undesirable effects of drug trafficking are the corruption of rule-of-law institutions and money-laundering, which impoverish us all. Spain is waging an uncompromising struggle in those areas through effective action taken by its judicial organs and specialized police forces.

I conclude by recalling that in the past my country, like many others, suffered the terrible scourge of drug trafficking. Fortunately, Spain's various Governments and society have understood that the suppression of organized criminal gangs had to be at all times compatible with the utmost respect for the law and the principles of the rule of law, and that drug users must not be penalized for their suffering, which is a disease and, as such, must be treated by social, psychological and medical means, and in no circumstances punished with imprisonment.

Based on those assumptions, we are cooperating with numerous multilateral and national actors and stand ready to share our experience and the human and technical resources at our disposal in this struggle, to which the international community is committed within the framework of the conventions of the United Nations, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and with other specialized agencies of the Organization.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Gerry Chanda, Deputy Secretary of Home Affairs of the Republic of Zambia.

Mr. Chanda (Zambia): At the outset, allow me to join others who have spoken before me to extend my delegation's congratulations to you, Mr. President, on the manner in which you have steered the deliberations of this special session.

My deiegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Thailand earlier on behalf of the Group of Seven and of Uganda on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/S-30/PV.2). We are also in agreement with the statement made by the representative of the People's Republic of China (see A/S-30/PV.1).

The Government of the Republic of Zambia recognizes the leading role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) as the primary policymaking body within the United Nations system dealing with drug-related matters, as stipulated in CND resolution 58/8. In that regard, I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the informative report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in its preparatory work for this special session on the world drug problem (see A/S-30/4).

Drug trafficking and abuse continue to pose serious social, health, security and economic costs to communities throughout the world, despite the increasing efforts of the global community to tackle the production, trafficking and use of illicit drugs. Zambia has not been spared the adverse effects of that global scourge, as the abuse and trafficking of illicit drugs continue to ravage families and communities as a whole. To that effect, I wish to take this opportunity to express our great appreciation for the global efforts aimed at controlling the consumption and trafficking of illicit drugs.

While Zambia was previously used as a mere transit point for illicit drugs, trends have changed and the country is now a net consumer of drugs such as cocaine and heroin. The consumption of cocaine and other hard drugs is on the rise. As a result, the Zambian Government, through its Drug Enforcement Commission, has continued to implement demand-reduction programmes through education and the sensitization of citizens on the dangers of illicit drugs,

counselling and the treatment and rehabilitation of drug-dependent persons.

In order to promote the early prevention of drug use among young people, the Government of the Republic of Zambia has incorporated issues relating to drugs and money-laundering in school curriculums from the primary- to secondary-school levels, including the development and production of supplementary readers on illicit drugs and money-laundering. In addition, my Government has initiated a youth programme to fund those whose aim is to empower young people by helping them to establish their own businesses and thereby refrain from indulging in illicit drugs such as cocaine.

Furthermore, the Zambian Government has continued to undertake a regular review of drug-control legislation in order to address the emerging challenges, threats and realities, which will provide an integrated, balanced strategy in combating illicit drugs. In order to strengthen the fight against money-laundering and other organized transnational crimes, Zambia has also established, under the Drug Enforcement Commission, an Anti-Money-Laundering Investigations Unit that investigates all money-laundering-related offences.

The Zambian Government recognizes the three international drug conventions and related protocols as the cornerstones for effective international drug control and prevention measures and underscores the importance of achieving the goals and targets outlined in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. We reaffirm that those international instruments are sufficient in providing the required guidance and appropriate approaches in curbing the world drug problem. While we appreciate that combating the world drug problem requires a balanced and integrated approach, and calls for the decriminalization and legalization of illicit drugs, such as cannabis, such actions in our view are against the spirit of the three international drug conventions.

I wish to seize this opportunity to welcome the outcome document of this session (resolution S-30/1, annex) and to note with satisfaction the special attention given by the document to human rights, youth, women, children and vulnerable communities. We could not agree more with the recommendations of the document, particularly on the need to strengthen the knowledge and capacity of policymakers in order to ensure that national policies fully respect human rights and protect the health and well-being of societies and communities as a whole.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that the world drug problem remains a major challenge to the international community and requires effective and increased bilateral and multilateral cooperation, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility, to effectively deal with all aspects of the scourge. I further wish to reaffirm Zambia's commitment to fostering regional and international cooperation through the exchange of information, expertise and best practices on drug prevention and treatment mechanisms.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Marek Tombarkiewicz, Vice-Minister of Health of the Republic of Poland.

Mr. Tombarkiewicz (Poland): The Republic of Poland fully supports the priorities of the drug-prevention policy formulated in the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (EU) on behalf of the EU member States (see A/S-30/PV.1).

Poland acknowledges the opportunities which the document prepared at the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna (see A/S-30/4) and this special session have created for the international community interested in an effective, human rights- and evidence-based drug policy. Poland also appreciates the fact that the majority of the provisions proposed in resolution S-30/1, aimed at improving the effectiveness of drug-prevention policies, promotes actions based on a realistic assessment of global and regional potential; guarantees respect for cultural, social and economic diversity; and takes into account the need to cooperate and to coordinate actions taken by supranational institutions and the international community.

Poland fully agrees that there is a need to base the principles of the drug-prevention policy on solutions going beyond the narrowly understood subject of controlled substances. Those principles should be viewed in the context of human rights and should balance the needs of public health and combating crime, participation by representatives from science and civil society in the process of analysis, and building strategies and action plans on active monitoring, risk assessment, scientific research and good practices. We express our strong conviction that, in the near future, it will be possible to discuss at the international level

the issues of the abolition of the death penalty or the availability of harm-reduction programmes for various groups of recipients, implemented within the framework of prevention, treatment and reintegration measures.

In this statement, we would like to highlight the challenges faced by drug policies that we consider to be of particular importance. We believe that a drug policy should be part of a broadly understood social policy built on scientific, ethical and legal foundations that are as free as possible of ideological or political interference. A drug-prevention policy should also encompass broad understanding of addiction issues and involve institutions that generally deal with health, social policy and safety for citizens, not those exclusively specializing in anti-drug activities. We also believe, in the context of the processes of increasing globalization, that the need for cooperation and coordinated actions is even greater.

Poland attaches special attention to new psychoactive substances. We consider that issue to be one of the greatest challenges to public health and safety in the years to come. We also believe that, in order to ensure an effective response to the cross-border nature and global reach of new psychoactive substances, we need systematic and structured cooperation and the coordination of actions at the United Nations level. The fight against the manufacturers of new psychoactive substances rarely yields the expected results, and the experience of many countries and international institutions in countering them teaches us that the techniques and programmes that have been in place for many years are ineffective, due to their passive-reactive nature and their application of extensive procedures.

It is therefore crucial to invest in public education and prevention. Developing individual and corporate responsibility for using mind-altering substances would be impossible without strengthening cooperation and coordinating actions with regional and local authorities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Therefore, we believe that we should seek to reconcile the two trends, without losing sight of the international context, to actively develop the subsidiarity principle and invest in developing local drug-policy standards, which, being closest to the citizens themselves, have the best chance for a quick and effective response to changing drug scenes and societal needs.

An example of such an approach is elaborated in the Warsaw Declaration of the 2016 second International Urban Drug Policies Conference, which highlights the importance of and need to develop and coordinate urban addiction prevention programmes. Poland also believes that effectively reducing and eliminating the problems generated by addiction in the contemporary world would be virtually impossible without the involvement of all key players, including representatives of the international community, international institutions, national political authorities and representatives of the NGOs.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Le Quy Vuong, Deputy Minister of Public Security of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

Mr. Quy Vuong (Viet Nam) (*spoke in Vietnamese; English text provided by the delegation*): Viet Nam would like to welcome the timely convening of this special session on the world drug problem in 2016. Viet Nam deeply appreciates the adoption of resolution S-30/1 and strongly believes that this comprehensive document serves as an important milestone in reiterating the determination of Member States and the United Nations system to cope with the world drug problem.

Fully aware of the complexity and serious consequences of drugs on human health, society and development, in recent years the Government of Viet Nam has actively implemented comprehensive and balanced policies and measures to prevent drug-related threats. Viet Nam has gradually updated its legal system and developed long-, mid- and short-term strategies and programmes on drug control in line with the three United Nations conventions. A law on drug prevention and control was promulgated in 2000 and further amended in 2008. In addition, a national strategy on drug control to 2020 and vision towards 2030 was issued in 2011. In order to ensure effective multisectoral coordination on drug control, a national committee on drug control was officially established in 2000. In 2013, the National Assembly adopted the new Constitution, with a separate chapter on human rights.

Viet Nam is of the view that the current global drug-control framework stipulated under the three conventions should remain the cornerstone of the global drug-control system. Viet Nam shares the long-term vision of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other countries based on a "say no to drugs" policy and striving for a world free of drugs. Drug-control solutions should be balanced among

supply reduction, demand reduction and harm reduction through law enforcement and socioeconomic measures to eliminate the root causes of the drug problem, as well as enhanced international cooperation in drug control.

Viet Nam attaches importance to such preventive measures as communication and education in raising awareness and promoting consensus to mobilize the active participation of the entire society in drug-control programmes and activities. Apart from that, Viet Nam has improved its drug-control agency system from the central to the provincial levels; strengthened the investigation and prosecution of drug-related crimes; integrated alternative development with socioeconomic and poverty-reduction programmes; and mobilized resources for drug control. With a humane spirit, the Government of Viet Nam has provided a wide range of drug treatment and drug-related support services based on diverse treatment models, including consultation services, harm-reduction measures and support for the reintegration of drug users.

Notwithstanding its positive achievements, Viet Nam still faces many challenges. First, Viet Nam is located in a region of increasingly complex drug-related crime. Secondly, an increasing number of new drugs and psychotropic substances are being abused, which requires the necessary technology and experience to effectively control. Thirdly, we are also short of resources to support drug treatment for and the reintegration of drug users. In order to overcome those challenges, Viet Nam wishes to receive generous and effective support and cooperation from its partners and United Nations agencies, in particular the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

For its part, Viet Nam would like to reconfirm its highest commitment to cooperate closely with the international community, especially with ASEAN, in the global struggle against drugs.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Evika Siliņa, Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Latvia.

Ms. Siliņa (Latvia): It is an honour to be here today. On behalf of the Republic of Latvia, let me thank the General Assembly Special Session Board for its efforts and all of the stakeholders for providing their input into the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) and the preparatory process.

Latvia fully aligns itself with the European Union (EU) position and appreciates the inclusion of several EU proposals in the outcome document.

Latvia is a devoted supporter of a balanced and effective drug policy based on scientific evidence and oriented towards human rights and public health. We maintain our commitment to the United Nations drug-control conventions, which comprise the cornerstone of the response to the world drug problem. We believe that there is sufficient flexibility within the provisions of the Conventions to accommodate a diversity of measures in addressing the international drug problem in accordance with national and regional circumstances.

The best approach should be tailored to national specificities, because each nation's particular needs are unique and there is no one-size-fits-all solution. An essential principle for Latvia is respect for fundamental rights. In that regard, we oppose the death penalty in all circumstances, without exception. We call upon States that still maintain the death penalty to establish a moratorium on executions as a first step towards the abolition of the death penalty. Latvia believes that the principle of proportionality must be applicable to all drug-related offences. For persons having committed minor, non-violent drug-related offences, alternatives to imprisonment should be applied.

Latvia recognizes the importance of access to risk- and harm-reduction measures. An effective drug policy should include drug demand reduction, including prevention, treatment and harm reduction, as well as supply reduction, including combating drug-related crime, actions against drug trafficking and international cooperation. Latvia remains an active advocate of strengthened international cooperation at the regional and global levels to counter drug trafficking and its links with corruption, terrorism and other forms of organized crime. We welcome any rational initiative targeted to strengthen comprehensive practical cross-border cooperation.

We are addressing the new challenges and growing threats, such as new psychoactive substances and the use of the Internet for drug trafficking. We already have made progress in Latvia by implementing the generic system of scheduling new psychoactive substances, based on the European early-warning system. For increased efficiency, we have also implemented a temporary ban.

The new psychoactive substances are a cross-border issue. It would be addressed even more successfully if effective complex solutions could get implemented globally. We do not have to choose one single best approach. We should combine the best elements of different evidence-based approaches to find a solution and focus on how to merge a sound public-health approach with an effective law enforcement policy, in compliance with universal human rights.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Andrea Orlando, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Italy.

Mr. Orlando (Italy) (*spoke in Italian; English text provided by the delegation*): While aligning ourselves with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1), we would also like to make a few remarks in our national capacity.

Addressing the world drug problem is one of the great global challenges of our times. Since the entry into force of the drug conventions and the adoption of the Political Declaration in 2009, we have gained experience and new challenges have emerged. We therefore need to adjust our domestic and international policies by strengthening projects that have proved to be effective and modifying those that have not, in light of the Sustainable Development Goals. I will provide a serious summary of the cost and benefits of the policies sustained until now without ideological conditions.

This special session is a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the ultimate goal of the drug conventions: the health and welfare of humankind. We should make the best use of the conventions' flexibility so as to implement them in a more balanced, humane and effective way, ensuring that our drug policies fully respect human rights and are truly health-oriented.

The international community must fully recognize drug use as a health issue and drug addiction as a chronic and treatable multifactorial health disorder that should be treated, not punished. Our approach should be pragmatic rather than ideological — a results-oriented approach that encourages States to promote public policies motivated by the criterion of effectiveness rather than demagoguery. The human person must be the centre of domestic drug policies. We must guarantee access to the full range of measures, including prevention, treatment, risk and harm reduction, rehabilitation, recovery and social reintegration, with special attention to women, youth, vulnerable groups and underserved populations, as well as those in prison settings.

Prevention is a key investment for society as a whole, and families and schools play a crucial role in this regard. HIV/AIDS is still a huge problem among people who use and inject drugs. Risk and harm- reduction approaches have proved to be effective. About three quarters of the global population does not have access to proper pain-relief treatment. This is one of the main shortcomings of the international drug control system, and it needs to be urgently addressed.

We must make sure that domestic criminal justice systems fully reflect the principle of proportionality enshrined in the conventions. Italian law provides a list of alternatives to detention for minor cases and ensures access to health-care services, including for those in prison. Italy decriminalized the use of drugs for personal consumption many years ago. In January 2016, we also decriminalized some violations related to the growing of cannabis for medical purposes.

We are engaged in countering drug trafficking and its many links to other serious crimes, including corruption and terrorism. We encourage all Member States to further promote the use of the tools provided for by the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 and by the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols to strengthen international judicial and law enforcement cooperation.

Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon), Vice-President, took the Chair

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) requires renewed efforts to tackle the socioeconomic roots of the world drug problem in close cooperation with all the relevant stakeholders. Strong cooperation with the scientific community, civil society and the private sector is crucial to the drafting, implementation, monitoring and assessment of drug policies. We encourage all relevant international organizations, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, to step up their cooperation with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

Italy firmly opposes the use of the death penalty in all circumstances, including for drug-related crimes,

and we regret that Member States failed to address this crucial issue in the outcome document (see resolution S-30/1, annex). We urge all countries that still have capital punishment for such crimes to adopt an immediate moratorium as a first step toward its final abolition.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Ken Wyatt, Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care of Australia.

Mr. Wyatt (Australia): This special session on the world drug problem is an important occasion for the world community in our ongoing efforts to reduce the illicit demand for and supply of controlled drugs. Australia supports the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) of the 2016 special session, which is consistent with our own balanced and evidence-based approach to illicit drug policy.

At the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Australia was pleased to sponsor resolution 59/11, fostering international collaboration on alternative controls to scheduling emerging synthetic drugs and precursor chemical movements. Over the past year Australia has significantly expanded its national response to these types of drugs, particularly the methamphetamine known in Australia as "ice". A Government-appointed task force comprised of eminent health and law-enforcement experts advised we cannot arrest our way out of the problems caused by illicit drug use. As a result of the task force findings, we are now putting more focus on reducing the demand for and supply of "ice" and the associated harms to individuals and communities.

A key part of developing our response to this drug was extensive consultation with stakeholders, including civil society and young Australians. This has long been a part of our approach to responding to drug issues, and we firmly believe this is critical to an effective, humane response in any setting, including our international forums. In order to further enhance international efforts to combat the illicit flow of synthetic drugs, I am pleased to announce that Australia has pledged an additional $100,000 to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for the Global SMART Programme, which is helping many countries improve their capacity to gather, analyse and report information on synthetic drugs.

Another matter of great concern to Australia is the many people around the world who still have limited or no access to pain relief provided by narcotic-based medicines. In the past, Australia has provided assistance to several countries to develop domestic systems to enable these drugs to be made available to patients, while preventing their misuse. To build on this work, I can further pledge an additional $100,000 from Australia to the UNODC to continue work on increasing access to controlled medicines for patients in need. We hope other Member States will join us in this endeavour.

In the context of expanding access to medicines, Australia recently passed legislation to allow legal cultivation of cannabis, where it will be used for medicinal and research purposes. Australia's Narcotic Drugs Amendment Bill 2016 ensures its compliance with the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs while enabling a sustainable supply of cannabis-based medical products for Australian patients through a national licensing scheme for the cultivation of cannabis for medicinal purposes. This legislation will facilitate more clinical trials and contribute to our knowledge of the risks and benefits of these medicines, which should benefit other countries and many people.

Australia maintains its position that prevention activities and treatments for illicit drug users are an effective and humane adjunct to law-enforcement measures. We actively endorse a public-health approach to drug use, which considers a proportional response to minor or non-violent drug-related crimes. Australia will also continue to press for the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances, including in relation to drug-related crimes.

In conclusion, Australia is very much looking forward to contributing to a productive session, focusing on an evidence-based and humane approach to the world drug problem and making progress in our united efforts to reduce the harms caused by it.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Ms. Christina Papoutsopoulou-Diamantopoulou, National Drug Coordinator of the Hellenic Republic .

Ms. Papoutsopoulou-Diamantopoulou (Greece): Greece aligns itself with the statement made previously by the observer of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1). However, we would like to add a few words reflecting our national perspective.

At a time when universal access to essential health services is at the heart of social policy, we are called

to contribute to the tackling of the world drug problem with new decision-making and policymaking models that reflect the changes and developments in science and society. The Greek drug policy reflects the European Union values of respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, development, equality, solidarity, the rule of law and human rights. In this regard, and above all, Greece fully supports the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances, including, primarily, for drug-related offences.

In line with the European Drugs Strategy and the global drug-policy dialogue, Greek drug policy has implemented a paradigm shift towards a health-based approach, giving great emphasis on non-discriminatory access to prevention, early intervention, risk and harm reduction, effective assessment, treatment and care, recovery, rehabilitation and social reintegration. We achieved this shift by working to update legislation in order to reflect our commitment to the protection of human rights and to promote a balanced national drug strategy that comprises alternative sanctioning measures, proportionate sentencing for drug offences, accessible treatment programmes, including in the prison system, and an institutional framework capable of ensuring synergies, collaboration and evaluation.

The world is currently facing the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War. In Greece, over the past few years, we have been facing an unexpected emergency. A huge influx of immigrants and refugees has reached Greece. In many cases, the people in question are facing a wide range of problems, including in housing and health. Although Greece is experiencing a deep economic crisis, it has, as a priority, included in its national health system the equal coverage of the health needs of refugees and migrants.

Greece fully supports the actions of the United Nations in terms of respecting the human rights of users of psychoactive substances, keeping in mind that drug policies should not be based on criminalizing people who use drugs or suffer from addiction. Such practices are outdated and cost-ineffective. We would like to stress the need to create a broad cooperative network of services that plans and implements a drug policy centred on people's needs and which incorporates all scientific, evidence-based approaches. This network, which includes Governmental agencies, scientific bodies, civil society and all significant interested parties, reflects the fact that social alliances should be a precondition for building balanced, effective and human-centred drug policies.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Ms. Elona Hoxha, Vice-Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Albania.

Ms. Hoxha (Albania): It is a distinct honour for me to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Albania at this thirtieth special session, on the world drug problem. We welcome the opportunity to participate in this important debate. I also wish to thank the President of the General Assembly for his leadership on this important issue and acknowledge the efforts of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna for leading the preparations for this special session, including resolution S-30/1, which we adopted yesterday by consensus.

Welcoming the adoption of the outcome document, Albania reaffirms its firm commitment to the goals and objectives of the international drug-control conventions to which it is a State party. These conventions are the cornerstones of the global response to the world drug problem. However, we deeply regret that the outcome document does not include language on the death penalty. Albania has continuously voiced a strong and unequivocal opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances, and we consider that the death penalty undermines human dignity. We also wish to underscore that errors made in its application are irreversible.

We further reiterate our determination to contribute to efforts aimed at tackling the world drug problem and at actively promoting a society free of drug abuse. To this end, the Republic of Albania has established policies on the fight against drugs and their precursors. The main anti-drug policy priorities include drafting and approving adequate legislation that is fully aligned with the European Union member States; drafting a national strategy on the fight against drugs; building the capacities of law-enforcement agencies; fortifying border control; establishing the Unified Intelligence Model with State Police, with a view to achieving the objective of intelligence-led policing; promoting inter-institutional cooperation among all actors involved in the fight against drugs; and strengthening international cooperation.

The National Drugs Strategy 2012-2016 provides strategic guidance for fighting this phenomenon. Its objectives are to create a safe environment for society by reducing supply; undertake public-

awareness campaigns; provide appropriate treatment and rehabilitation services; come up with a policy to coordinate and manage the fight against drugs; and build an effective system for information-gathering and analysis.

The fight against the cultivation of narcotic plants and the production, distribution and trafficking of narcotic drugs remain high on the agenda of the Government of Albania. The new National Drugs Strategy 2017-2022 is expected in an effective manner to address new developments, including the growing threats posed by new psychoactive substances and the use of the Internet and social media for drug trafficking.

I would like to reiterate that the international drug-control conventions to which the Republic of Albania is a State party place an obligation on Governments, inter alia, to ensure that controlled substances are always available for medical and scientific purposes. While promoting safety in our streets and communities, we should also emphasize the health and welfare of humankind, which represents one of the founding purposes of the international drug conventions.

In implementing the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), we must recognize the need for global drug policies that put people first. Albania therefore strongly supports and favours a drugs policy seen in a wider socioeconomic context, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), in order to promote health, democracy, the rule of law and sustainable livelihoods.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Imre Nyitrai, Deputy State Secretary for Social Affairs, Minister of Human Capacities of Hungary.

Mr. Nyitrai (Hungary): Let me start by welcoming Mr. Mogens Lykketoft as President of this special session. Hungary highly appreciates the preparatory work of the Secretariat and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1). In our national capacity, we would like to highlight some additional points.

This special session is a timely and excellent opportunity to assess achievements and reflect on the situation of the world drug problem since the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. Hungary welcomes the adoption of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), which reflects common views, promotes the results achieved so far and identifies new challenges in the field. Although we are aware of the fact that global approaches and thinking on the drug problem differ, important steps have nevertheless been taken to meet our ultimate goal of including, in the outcome document, realities facing society globally. With stronger international cooperation and definitive national engagement, we will be in a position to formulate effective messages during the review of the Political Declaration in 2019, in line with the three United Nations drug control conventions.

While the drug problem is becoming an ever more complex phenomenon, during the past decade the rapid appearance of new psychoactive substances has become our own new reality. In order to allow an effective and swift response to the challenges posed by those substances, the Hungarian Government was among the first Member States to create an all-new drug control system in 2012. Recent drug control regulations have allowed law-enforcement authorities to seize those potentially harmful substances and step up efforts against their illicit trafficking. In that context, Hungary highly welcomes the analytical work and thorough risk assessment on the part of the World Health Organization, which led to the scheduling of several harmful new psychoactive substances by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

In 2013, the Hungarian Parliament adopted its national drug-control strategy, which will remain in force until 2020. Hungary aims to both address and counter the drug problem in a balanced way, while strengthening our commitment to the three United Nations conventions and endorsing their public-health aspects. The main goal of the strategy is to reduce illicit drug use with targeted, society-based interventions. We consider multifaceted prevention activities, a recovery-oriented approach, and more effective drug-related crime prevention and law-enforcement measures to be the most important benefits of our strategy. The strategy enables the promotion of a broader application of demand and supply reduction interventions and the mobilization of human and social resources.

We are convinced that within the global framework we can successfully address and counter the world drug problem, taking into account respective areas of competence under national legislation as well. We look forward to implementing the operational

recommendations of the outcome document, in close cooperation with the United Nations and all relevant stakeholders.

The Acting President: I give the floor to Mr. Michael Botticelli, Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy of the United States of America.

Mr. Botticelli (United States of America): It has been 18 years since the previous special session on the world drug problem. Since 1998, together we have made progress in addressing illicit drug use and advancing a more balanced and humane approach to drug policy. But we still have much work to do. This session represents a rare opportunity to address the issues, evaluate our progress and chart a path forward for how the nations of the world respond to the drug problem.

Illicit substance use remains a problem that ruins countless lives, families and communities and supports criminal organizations. Since the previous special session on this issue, we have had some success in disrupting trafficking and production networks around the world. That is a critical effort, and while we are encouraged by international cooperation on new psychoactive substances, more steps are necessary to address that quickly changing problem. In addition, our law-enforcement efforts should focus on criminal organizations, not on people with substance-use disorders who need treatment and recovery support services.

The United States strongly supports and has undertaken significant drug policy reform under the framework of the three United Nations conventions. Critical reforms, such as a public-health approach and investment to provide better access to treatment and less punitive approaches in our criminal justice system, are all explicitly allowed by the conventions.

As I said at the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna last month, the United States firmly believes that investing in policies and programmes to help our citizens is the solution to our problem. For people with substance-use disorders, we need to provide access to proven pathways to recovery, such as medication-assisted treatment. We must address the needs of underserved populations in every country, such as women and children, youth, indigenous populations, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, rural populations and incarcerated individuals. Our drug policies must address the unique needs of all sectors of our society. We also must continue to invest in research so we can improve our strategies and policies to prevent substance-use and treat people with substance use disorders. Drug policy must be rooted in science and research.

Of course, we must still promote efforts to prevent drug use from ever beginning, and treatment strategies for substance-use disorders must be based on science and evidence. Quality interventions should be provided early so we can prevent individuals from developing substance-use disorders in the first place, and we need to make sure that evidence-based services are in place to help prevent the spread of HIV, hepatitis and other preventable diseases. We need to continue to address substance-use disorders while ensuring that individuals receive safe, effective treatment for their medical needs associated with their drug use.

In the United States, we have begun implementing policies to reform our criminal justice system, reduce incarceration and provide treatment services to incarcerated people to prepare them for successful re-entry into society. That includes promoting sentencing reform and proportionality for drug crimes. After people have served a criminal sentence, we must make certain that their records do not keep them from obtaining employment or housing. Their pasts should not prevent them from having a future in our societies. President Obama has taken steps to allow individuals with criminal records to be considered for federal employment, and we are urging state and local Governments, along with private companies, to do the same. We have also worked to expand access to medication-assisted treatment, and today millions of people in the United States live in recovery.

It is not easy to make reforms, but it must be done if we are to improve the lives of our citizens and the health of our nations. To that end, the United States Government put forth a plan that balances our approach between public health and law enforcement. While we continue to work with our partner nations to counter the production and trafficking of drugs and to support their efforts to reduce demand, we have invested record amounts of domestic funding to expand access to treatment for people with substance use disorders. President Obama is calling for another $1 billion in new funding to ensure that every person who needs treatment can get it.

Future progress depends on our nations working together so that all of our citizens can live healthy, productive lives. The United States looks forward to a successful special session in support of that goal.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Sulaiman Fahad Al-Fahad, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior of the State of Kuwait.

Mr. Al-Fahad (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the delegation of the State of Kuwait, to express our sincere appreciation for the efforts made by all countries and mandated by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) to prepare for this special session. We would also like to voice our deep satisfaction with the consensus achieved in Vienna, resulting in resolution S-30/1, annex, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem". We stress our full support and cooperation to ensure the success of this important session.

The delegation of Kuwait stresses the vital role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the specialized entities setting policies and programmes in the United Nations. The CND considers all matters related to combating and controlling drugs and psychotropic substances. We also value the capacity-building and coordination activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and its provision of technical assistance to countries fighting drugs.

This special session represents a genuine opportunity to take the necessary and appropriate decisions to counter the scourge of drugs, which represents a huge danger to individuals and communities. This threat could undermine the pillars of economic development and threaten stability and the rule of law. We need, therefore, genuine international cooperation and the serious resolve to confront it, based on the principle of shared responsibility, which we must all shoulder.

My delegation looks forward to our meeting giving a new impetus to achieving the desired goals and targets, including the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, as well as the Joint Ministerial Statement issued at the 2014 high-level review by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, within the framework of all three international drug control conventions, the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The State of Kuwait pays special attention to the treatment of addicts and drug users. It provides them with the necessary care and rehabilitation to ensure their reintegration into society as effective and productive members, and with the necessary hospitalization and rehabilitation centres. We have pioneered the establishment of a therapeutic and rehabilitation centre that treats drug addicts, following state-of-the-art methodologies in that context. We have also undertaken and implemented programmes, with the participation of various entities within the country, to achieve the sole objective of offering treatment to those individuals, ensuring their rehabilitation and providing all the necessary health, education and psychological help.

In conclusion, the State of Kuwait renews its commitment to all three international drug control conventions, the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action and 2014 Joint Ministerial Statement, in full respect for human rights within the framework of respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and for the cultural and social specificities of each country. We also emphasize our common and shared responsibility in responding to the world drug problem.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Luxembourg welcomes the convening of this special session, which allows us to reaffirm our common determination to address the world drug problem and to review the progress achieved in the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

Faced with the world drug problem, Luxembourg advocates a more balanced and integrated approach that focuses on aspects of public health, in line with the original purpose of the international drug-control conventions and in full respect for human rights, as mentioned in the European Union Declaration, to which my country fully subscribes. Allow me in that context once again to reaffirm our categorical rejection of the recourse to the death penalty in all circumstances.

At the time of the previous special session on drugs, in 1998, Luxembourg had eight high-risk drug users for every 1,000 people in the workforce. Today, that rate is closer to five people per 1,000. During that same period,

the mortality and morbidity associated with drugs have also been significantly reduced at the national level. Since 1998, we have adopted three national action plans that were submitted for external evaluation, and the results have enabled us to adapt response strategies. In addition to diversifying preventive measures, risk and harm reduction, treatment and social reintegration, pilot projects have been launched that, in the meantime, have become an integral part of the multiple national assistance measures available to drug users, such as opening a hall for drug use under medical supervision and else a needle-exchange programme in prisons. Luxembourg is currently one of the States members of the European Union with the highest coverage of opiate users undergoing substitution treatment and a consistently decreasing mortality rate.

At the national level, we are currently seeing a significantly increased supply of cocaine, which is causing a sharp rise in injections and is largely responsible for an upsurge in new HIV infections. Faced with those emerging dynamics, we advocate a proactive strategy to counter the negative effects of new patterns of use, such as the spread of new psychoactive substances, and an adaptive strategy to better calibrate our response to the problem in its global dimensions.

The world drug problem is constantly evolving. We must equip ourselves with the tools necessary to address current and future challenges by combining the measures proven to be effective, best practices and innovative policies in order to diversify our response strategies. It is our sincere hope that this special session and the outcome document that we have adopted (resolution S-30/1, annex), in particular its practical recommendations, will provide the means to collectively address and combat the world drug problem.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of Austria.

Mr. Kickert (Austria): Austria fully aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1).

At the outset, I would like to congratulate all delegations and other stakeholders on the excellent work they have done in Vienna, which resulted in the successful adoption of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) at this special session. Much has been achieved, but challenges persist. The world drug problem remains a complex challenge to the health and well-being of humankind. It poses a major threat to human dignity, development, safety and international security. We are here at this special session to discuss these challenges — challenges that cannot be addressed in isolation but rather need to be tackled through a comprehensive, integrated and balanced approach. Building on experience and evidence, drug policies should be based on an appropriate balance between demand and supply reduction measures. The Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem stresses this quite clearly.

It remains a global challenge to guarantee a stronger focus on health and social problems related to drug consumption and drug addiction. At this special session, we all should engage in open debates about appropriate solutions at the national, regional and international levels, while ensuring full respect for human rights, the three international drug control conventions and other relevant documents of international law. More focus on science and evidence should allow us to address critical issues beyond ideological controversies and political disputes. In that regard, Austria stands ready to offer its experience and best practices concerning risk and harm reduction measures, including maintenance therapy, needle exchange programmes or substitution treatment in prison facilities.

Austria is strongly committed to human rights. As a cross-cutting issue, a human-rights-based approach must be the basis for any drug policy. We regret that no reference to capital punishment is included in the special session outcome document. We need to discuss the abolition of punishments that are against human dignity and the proportionality of drug-related sentences. On the other hand, Austria is pleased to see the importance of alternative development underlined in the outcome document. Austria is devoted to addressing drug-related socioeconomic issues in preventing the illicit cultivation of narcotic plants through alternative development programmes.

The world drug problem can be tackled only through successful international cooperation. In that regard, the Vienna-based United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as the leading entity in the United Nations system for addressing and countering the world drug problem, has proved to be the principal reference point, based on its broad mandate, comprehensive expertise and established partnerships.

On behalf of Austria, I express our appreciation for the responsible way the Commission on Narcotic Drugs has fulfilled the task of preparing the 2016 special session. We look forward to continuing the cooperation with all our partners, including civil society, under the trusted coordination of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Office on Drugs and Crime, on our path to 2019 and beyond.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Kingdom of Belgium.

Ms. Frankinet (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium fully aligns itself with the European Union (EU) position and therefore endorses the statement made by the representative of the Netherlands, which is the current President of the EU Council (see A/S-30/PV.3).

We also welcome the adoption of the outcome document, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem" (resolution S-30/1, annex). The document is important in several respects. First, it confirms the importance of the goals and objectives of the three international conventions on drugs, especially physical health and the well-being of humankind. It is the health approach above all that must inform all of our policies. Secondly, the document clearly highlights the importance of a policy based on scientific evidence. Finally, it is in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Belgium recalls that consistency is essential in aligning the various elements when establishing international drug policy. Such consistency implies the right to life, security, health and health care by way of effective tools. Belgium therefore calls for the total abolition of the death penalty, including in all cases of drug-related offences. Capital punishment is in total contradiction with the international commitment to human rights and is absolutely ineffective. In general, penalties commensurate with the gravity of the offence form the foundation of our criminal law. That principle is also successful as a public-health approach, as it can lead to appropriate, effective care at an earlier stage.

The right to health and health care without discrimination is essential and must prevail, whether in respect of prevention, brief and early interventions, harm reduction, treatment or more generally social integration. Risk reduction measures such as needle exchange programmes, psychosocial support and opiate substitution treatment have been shown to be effective in an extremely convincing manner and therefore have their place in effective policymaking. The right to health and health care also involves access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion. The fact that 75 per cent of the global population does not have guaranteed access to these substances must become a thing of the past. We must take action.

This situation leads to human suffering and is no longer acceptable in the twenty-first century. We welcome the emphasis placed on that topic in the outcome document. Belgium will continue to underscore this essential issue in its future policy at both the diplomatic and the practical levels. Specifically, Belgium supports the global partnership programme of the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Union for International Cancer Control, under which we have financed a project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo totaling €100,000. Belgium also supports the inclusive and integrated strengthening of health care systems through cooperation with its partner countries.

The task ahead is significant. The outcome document lists the initiatives to be taken, including reviewing legislation, capacity-building and training for professionals, and developing supply management systems for various substances. Belgium recalls the importance of a thorough analysis of needs in order to ensure effective, comprehensive action. It is clear that cooperation among agencies and the role of the International Narcotics Control Board and WHO, in particular, are crucial in that area. The challenge is large and complex, but we must meet it in order to ensure the successful implementation of our instruments and policies.

The phenomenon of new psychoactive substances is alarming and merits our full attention. For various reasons, Belgium is among the countries most beset by this scourge in terms of production and trafficking. With other EU States members, Belgium will seek to develop detection mechanisms aimed at new substances on the market, concomitant regulatory systems and prevention initiatives, as well as risk reduction and treatment, in the framework of our international cooperation, which we intend to strengthen.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): Allow me to salute the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Lykketoft.

Brazil welcomes this special session on the world drug problem. Despite progress since the 1998 special session, it is imperative to recognize that the world drug problem — given its complexity and multidimensional nature — remains a challenge to our national, regional and international efforts. Among the challenges we must all face are deaths caused by problematic drug use, the prevalence of diseases such as HIV and hepatitis, low levels of access to treatment, compulsory treatment, and the incarceration of drug users. That is why this special session in 2016 could not be more timely. It is an opportunity to critically assess our responses to the world drug problem and seek a consensus on more balanced, effective and humane policies.

Brazil has been fully engaged in the process. The evaluation of our policies, which we have undertaken, is already an important legacy of the process. I take this opportunity to reaffirm the importance of the dialogue and close cooperation we have established with civil-society organizations. They have been key partners throughout all our endeavours. I also underscore the centrality of cooperation and coordination with all Latin American and Caribbean countries through regional entities such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Union of South American Nations and the Southern Common Market. Our common views are much more relevant than the inevitable differences arising from specific national circumstances.

Brazil is committed to the implementation of evidence-based drug policies with a balanced, multidisciplinary and integrated approach. Respect for human rights and an emphasis on public-health issues are at the very core of that approach. We firmly seek to strengthen our policies to counter the supply of drugs, focusing on the strongest links between organized crime and money-laundering. Our capacity to detect and schedule new substances is becoming more and more efficient. At the same time, we need to ensure the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific use.

Our demand reduction policies are based on prevention, voluntary treatment, care and social reintegration. Those policies recognize the importance of harm-reduction programmes and of preventing the stigmatization and marginalization of drug users. Our legal framework emphasizes those aspects and determines that drug users should not be subject to incarceration. Ensuring the appropriate and fair application of those laws, however, remains a challenge. In 2011, our Government launched an ambitious national programme that invested approximately $2 billion over four years in activities of prevention, care and public security. Ninety per cent of those resources were allocated to public-health and social-assistance networks. That points to an important rebalancing in our efforts. It is a recognition that an effective drug policy should focus not on combating a substance, but rather on the health and welfare of humankind.

We note with great satisfaction that the evolution of the debate in Brazil seems to be aligned with the gradual evolution of the multilateral debate on the world drug problem. In that context, we wish to praise the outcome document adopted at this special session (resolution S-30/1, annex). Our joint commitment is a step towards a positive review, in 2019, of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. Three points in particular that were incorporated in the outcome document are considered important by Brazil.

First is the centrality of the three drug-control Conventions, along with other relevant international instruments, and the recognition of their flexibility to accommodate different national perspectives. Second is the emphasis on respect for human rights and other cross-cutting aspects, such as the gender perspective and attention to vulnerable groups. Third is the recognition that drug policies must focus primarily on the health and welfare of humankind. Despite that evident positive evolution, we regret that it was not possible to include in the document a reference to an issue that is of central concern to Brazil, namely, the abolition of the death penalty for drug-related offences. We reiterate our view that the death penalty is a violation of the most fundamental human right — the right to life.

We acknowledge that there is still much room for improvement in drug policies. In the lead-up to 2019, Brazil considers it essential for the international debate on the world drug problem to incorporate two broad issues.

First, we believe it necessary to improve and diversify the indicators that are currently used to evaluate drug policies. Our understanding is that the multidimensional nature of the world drug problem demands a new metric that better reflects its complexity. Secondly, we underline the importance of linking the discussions on the world drug problem to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). I would especially highlight Goal 10, "Reduce inequality within and among countries". Brazil considers that goal to be a call on all of us to discuss alternative development policies that also reach the urban environment. It is also a call to incorporate a racial perspective into our drug policies, recognizing the specific needs of ethnic groups with a history of exclusion from public policies.

In conclusion, we welcome the progress achieved through the special session process and underscore the need for further progress as we move towards 2019.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of Guyana.

Mr. Talbot (Guyana): The outcome document of this thirtieth special session, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem" (resolution S-30/1, annex), is an important and welcome step forward in the global response to this monumental challenge to the health, security and well-being of all humankind. Guyana commends the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and all delegations for this very important result.

As the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime *World Drug Report 2015* indicates, some 246 million people worldwide — or 1 out of every 20 persons between the ages of 15 and 64 years — used an illicit substance in the year 2013. The impacts of that challenge are pervasive across countries and regions. Strong collaborative efforts are therefore required internationally and nationally to effectively combat the world drug problem.

As a party to the three main United Nations conventions on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and other international instruments on drug control, Guyana reaffirms its commitment to their full and effective implementation. Indeed, our ability to tackle the world drug problem is critical to our capacity to effectively achieve the Sustainable Development Goals to which we have agreed.

National implementation efforts find expression in the fourth iteration of the national drug strategy master plan, covering the period 2016-2020, which is currently being finalized. The master plan will bring into focus, within a single framework, all national actions and concerns about drug control. It explains national policies, identifies priorities and assigns responsibility for drug control efforts. In essence, it guides the operational plans of all Government departments and other bodies involved in the reduction of demand, supply control and all other aspects of the national fight against drug abuse and its associated ills.

Also to be considered are the socioeconomic implications of the drug problem, including its impacts on public health, on children and youth and on families, as well as its links to crime, among other things. The Government of Guyana, through efforts led by the Ministry of Public Health, has accorded priority to providing treatments for drug dependency at the general and specialized-care levels in the health system, with particular emphasis on early diagnosis, drug abuse prevention and primary care. Drug-abuse prevention and treatment programmes are both community-based and residential, and provide for rehabilitation, aftercare and social reintegration.

Drug trafficking, the critical link between supply and demand, has fuelled a global criminal enterprise, valued in the hundreds of billions of dollars, that poses a growing challenge to stability and security both globally and in our region. Guyana, because of its geographical location, is seen, along with other Caribbean countries, as a strategic transshipment route for drugs originating from the producing countries in South America and destined for the largest international markets of North America and Europe.

Global collaboration and coordination are essential to securing lasting success in combating the transnational drug trade. My delegation is encouraged by the fact that national efforts to deal with all aspects of supply and demand reduction within Guyana are supported by extensive international cooperation, including at the bilateral and regional levels. In the end, effectively tackling the world drug problem will require an integrated, balanced and multidisciplinary response, undergirded by a sense of shared responsibility among all stakeholders. Guyana will continue to deploy all efforts at the policy, legislative and operational levels to ensure an effective national response.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the State of Israel.

Mr. Roet (Israel): The devastating impact of drug abuse in society is a plague that spares no nation. In Israel, as in countries around the world, substance abuse has destroyed individuals, shattered families and devastated entire communities.

Let me tell the story of someone I will call "D", a young Israeli from the southern city of Beersheba, who has been clean for 13 years and 29 days. On his journey towards freedom from addiction, D faced many challenges, but he was inspired to turn his life around in order to earn back his pride and his daughter's respect. Today, D is a certified instructor and therapist, helping others to free themselves from addiction. He has said, "When I started the process of rehabilitation, I vowed to myself that if I were successful in beating the addiction, I would dedicate everything I have to help others and prevent youths from making the same mistakes I made".

Stories like that of D demonstrate why today's discussion is so vital. This special session is an opportunity for all of us to review what has been achieved and to assess what remains to be done in order to effectively address the world drug problem. Israel welcomes the adoption of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) and its recommendations. We strongly reiterate our commitment to global efforts to achieve those important ends. We also reaffirm our staunch support for the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the International Narcotics Control Board, as they lead international drug-control efforts in the United Nations. As we begin to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), it is important to emphasize that effectively addressing the world drug problem is a part of the broader effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. A drug-free world is a more sustainable world.

We must address the world drug problem with the goal of protecting the health and welfare of society in accordance with existing international drug conventions. Our approach must be comprehensive and balanced. Treatment for drug abuse should be based on a human-rights-centred approach that focuses on the needs of those most affected. Demand-reduction policies should be tailored to the unique needs of the target population. Programmes must be adapted to gender, age and cultural sensitivities. Adapting treatment to unique individual circumstances is what our call to make people the priority really means.

The State of Israel has developed a wide range of evidence-based interventions and programmes, beginning with prevention activities for very young children and throughout the school system. Our focus is on promoting positive and healthful life skills and encouraging parental involvement. We have a responsibility to ensure that all of our children receive every chance to succeed.

The drug abuse plague affects all sectors of society, and we must therefore provide solutions for a wide variety of individuals. In Israel, a broad range of treatment options is offered to those in need. Interventions are adapted to high-risk youths, to patients suffering from multiple chronic diseases, detainees and prisoners, homeless persons and others facing hardship. We are fully committed to ensuring that all people, regardless of their backgrounds or situation in life, get the help they deserve. Israel believes that no comprehensive approach is complete without giving those in need access to harm-reduction measures. Such measures have proved to be effective in reducing the spread of HIV and other blood-borne diseases.

The pandemic of drug abuse is a challenge all around the globe, so it requires a global commitment to fighting it. It is our common responsibility to share best practices and to exchange information. In collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Israel is offering annual training courses in developing countries to enhance the training of professionals working in the field of drug treatment. Such collaboration increased last summer, when the training course was geared towards the UNODC staff from regional offices around the world. The course was conducted by Israeli professionals alongside UNODC staff from the Vienna headquarters, marking yet another landmark in our growing cooperation.

International cooperation is also essential in order to effectively address the new challenges posed by new psychoactive substances. In 2013, Israel enacted legislation to combat new psychoactive substances, allowing temporary or emergency measures. The key to the approach is focusing on the sellers and manufacturers, rather than criminalizing the users. We must differentiate between those who profit from drug use and those who suffer from drug abuse.

While respecting the sovereignty of every State, we advocate that countries employ the principle of proportionality for sentencing in their judicial system. In Israel, the concept that a criminal sentence should be in proportion to the severity of the crime is a guiding principle. When appropriate, the criminal justice system also employs alternatives to incarceration, including treatment programmes, public service or fines. Particular care is given to minors in our criminal justice system, which makes the treatment and rehabilitation of minors its top priority.

It took the international community 18 years to come together again to address the world drug problem. In Hebrew, 18 is *chai*, which also means "life". Let us work together to save the lives of millions who are affected by drug abuse. Today, the world has committed itself to leaving no one behind. We should use this opportunity to enhance efforts, build positive dialogues and commit ourselves to the global goal of ending the plague of drug abuse.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with resolution 48/5, of 13 October 1993, I now give the floor to Mr. Guy Vinet, observer of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Mr. Vinet (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe): At the outset, I would like to commend the General Assembly for convening this inclusive special session. The issue we have been discussing for two days and will continue discussing tomorrow is a very important one for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and I would like to take just a few minutes to draw the Assembly's attention to what the OSCE can do to contribute to tackling it.

The combined value of the northern and Balkan heroin-trafficking routes from Afghanistan to the Russian Federation and Europe is $30 billion a year. The estimated number of young Europeans using cannabis in 2014 was 14 million. The number of new psychoactive substances monitored by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in 2015 was 640. Those impressive figures tell us what our challenge is.

The world drug problem affects every aspect of development, including environmental, economic and social issues. It also poses a significant threat to peace and security in a number of OSCE-participating States and Partners for Cooperation countries. Its predominant effects are on the younger generation, with long-term consequences that can extend over many years and through all social groups. Countering the transnational threats posed by illicit drugs is our common and shared responsibility, as most of the speakers before me, including the President, have said.

The OSCE is the world's largest organization formed under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. It unites 57 participating States from Vancouver to Vladivostok and 11 Partners for Cooperation countries in the Mediterranean and Asia. It recognizes the leading role of the United Nations in combating illicit drugs and the diversion of chemical precursors. We emphasize the positive role of UNODC and cooperation with it, and support further strengthening our existing relationship with, among others, the International Narcotics Control Board, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe, and INTERPOL, with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of assistance to the OSCE region.

Based on its inherent strengths — a comprehensive approach to security, consensus-based decision-making and inclusive membership — the OSCE submitted specific recommendations to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the issues to be addressed at the special session. The OSCE Ministerial Council held in Belgrade in 2015 adopted a declaration on OSCE activities in support of global efforts in tackling the world drug problem, in which Ministers called on participating States to support recommendations to comply with the three United Nations drug-control conventions; pursue a balanced, integrated approach to include reducing supply and demand, as well as promoting international cooperation; and facilitate partnership with the private sector and cooperation among the public health, education and law-enforcement sectors. Ministers underlined that the fight against drug trafficking must be accompanied by efforts to combat corruption, money laundering and other forms of organized crime. Using the OSCE's comparative advantages, which include a network of cross-dimensional institutions and 17 field operations, we will continue to provide tailored support for tackling the world drug problem to States — which are also States Members of the United Nations — that ask to participate.

The OSCE's commitments, such as its strategic framework for police-related activities, its concept for combating the threat of illicit drugs and the diversion of chemical precursors and its border security and management concept, have laid solid groundwork for

its action against illicit drugs. The relevant activities of the OSCE are making a significant contribution to the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem and are carried out with full respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.

In conclusion, the OSCE is a force multiplier. We support our participating States and Partners for Cooperation countries through cross-cutting field operations and institutions aimed at mitigating the world drug problem. We enhance mutual cooperation among various international, regional and national stakeholders in countering the world drug problem. We command regional expertise on how to create the conditions in which individuals can live free of any threats to their security from the world drug problem. The future of the world is here today, and I wish this special session of the General Assembly every success.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

I shall now give the floor to those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I would like to remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply should be limited to 10 minutes for the first statement and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Sargsyan (Armenia): We are again compelled to take the floor in reaction to the comments made by the representative of Azerbaijan. I would like to point out that the Head of the delegation of Azerbaijan, Deputy Prime Minister Ali Hasanov, devoted almost half of his address yesterday (see A/S-30/PV.1) to attacking my nation and speculating on issues based on narrow domestic narratives. It was not in line with the purposes of the special session; in fact, it constitutes abuse of the forum. Azerbaijan's portrayal of Nagorno Karabakh as a location for drug production and transit is a fantasy and an illustration of its inability to accept the existence of fully functioning and responsible governance in Nagorno Karabakh.

Not surprisingly, Azerbaijan is the only source for such claims, since in real life and within the broader international community its fantasies are not substantiated by facts. Azerbaijan simply cannot tolerate the existence of a democratic Nagorno Karabakh, fully and responsibly exercising its right to self-determination and building democratic and accountable institutions, social harmony, dignity and public consolidation against a background of its long experience of Azerbaijan's imposition of an oppressive, brutal, despotic regime inside its own country. Azerbaijan's persistent violations of human rights in its own country, its continuing attacks on and imprisonment of representatives of civil society, the media and human rights defenders, coupled with its regular dissemination of intolerance and hatred towards the Armenian people, are the causes underlying the regime's criminal military adventurism.

Azerbaijan's aggressive military response to a people's peaceful aspiration to exercising its right to self-determination serves only to legitimize those aspirations and deprives the aggressor of any claim to authority over them. Azerbaijan flouted every commitment to peace and security in the region when it unleashed a large-scale operation against the people of Nagorno Karabakh in the early hours of 2 April. In violation of the trilateral ceasefire agreement of 1994 between Azerbaijan, Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia, Azerbaijan launched a heinous attack on Nagorno Karabakh using heavy artillery, armoured vehicles, tanks and air power. Its military aggression has been accompanied by dehumanizing brutality, with killings of civilians, beheadings in the style of the Islamic State, mutilations and other atrocities. Most disturbingly, that barbarity has been celebrated in public and in social media, in an affront to the civilized world.

This is a gross violation of the core international instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Geneva Convention of 1949 and its protocols, and it has been duly brought to the attention of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Azerbaijan's military aggression has also inflicted major damage on public and private property and facilities in Nagorno Karabakh.

The allegations that Nagorno Karabakh started the April escalation are simply baseless, since documented facts and accounts show the opposite. Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia have no reason, purpose or interest in violating the ceasefire and conducting a military offensive. Azerbaijan has refused every

proposal for mediation, including calls for establishing confidence-building measures between the conflicting parties such as the creation of an investigative mechanism aimed at preventing ceasefire violations and the withdrawal of snipers from the line of contact. Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh accepted the measures proposed by the mediators.

Back in the 1990s, Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh held hundreds of thousands of refugees. However, unlike Azerbaijan, neither of them has ever politicized the plight of internally displaced persons and refugees and both invested their limited resources in helping them to fully integrate. Had the leadership of Azerbaijan been sincerely and genuinely interested in finding a sustainable solution for its affected population, it would have done so over the past two decades. Instead of channelling its budget, which is majorly supported by petrodollars, towards a durable solution to the issue, Azerbaijan has decided to exploit the issue and use its petrodollars to buy extremely large quantities of arms and military hardware.

Along with its lack of respect for the work of this special session, Azerbaijan is using this debate in other settings to spew misinformation, continue its warmongering and mislead the international community. That is how its delegation is contributing to advancing our important session on the world drug problem. Instead of disseminating baseless propaganda and hijacking our forum, the delegation of Azerbaijan should have addressed in depth the growing cases of drug trafficking on its territory and tackled the issue of drug abuse among its population, since, according to a number of international reports, Azerbaijan is increasingly favoured as a transit country for the illicit trade in narcotics and is among those countries with the highest rates of injecting drug use, more than three times the global average.

It is imperative that Azerbaijan be held accountable for instigating escalation in the region and challenging its peace and security. Any position within the international community that is based on biases or religious affiliations should be rejected, and Azerbaijan should be denied any further forum-shopping, abuse of the United Nations or distortion of the purposes and substance of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and other relevant documents, and should be urged to adhere strictly to a peaceful settlement of the conflict within the internationally agreed format of the co-chairship of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. I hope that the delegation of Azerbaijan will reflect on the issues I have brought to the attention of the General Assembly.

Mr. Rafiyev (Azerbaijan): We regret having to once again take the floor at the end of the day. However, the delegation of Armenia's slanderous statements compel us to respond to the groundless accusations we have just heard about my country. We find Armenia's words quite strange, considering that in its response yesterday to our statement it complained about Azerbaijan's deviation from the meeting's agenda. The statement we heard from it today covered no substantive issues pertaining to that agenda.

Yesterday and today, the Armenian delegation referred to the *World Drug Report 2015* and criticized the drug situation in Azerbaijan. It is good to see that the Armenian delegation has started reading the *World Drug Report*, since the delegation of Armenia in Vienna has always been unaware of the facts reflected in previous reports. Regarding the report itself, our authorities — unlike those of Armenia, conducting criminal activities in Azerbaijan's territory and hiding the real statistics on the drug situation in its country — have always been in favour of transparency, providing the international community with reliable statistics and supporting the work being done by our law-enforcement bodies in seizing narcotic drugs transited through or destined for Azerbaijan.

The representative of Armenia claimed that the occupied territories are not uncontrolled but under the effective control of Nagorno Karabakh. I would like to suggest that he read the *World Drug Report 2010*, which he mentioned yesterday and which clearly reflects the fact that the 132 kilometres of the southern border of Azerbaijan that were left uncontrolled owing to the unresolved conflict are a major source of the drug threat in the region.

As for the comments on human rights, it is curious that the representative of Armenia, the country primarily responsible for unleashing the war and perpetrating acts of aggression against Azerbaijan, carrying out ethnic cleansing on a massive scale, committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and other heinous crimes during the conflict and advocating an undisguised racist ideology, is now attempting to criticize Azerbaijan on issues pertaining to such notions as peace, human rights, negotiations and conflict resolution. A country half of whose population has left it has no right to speak

about human rights. Every major human rights activist has left Armenia; recently one even fled to Azerbaijan. The representative of Armenia must be well aware that whatever he considers to be the exercise of the right to self-determination by the Armenian ethnic minority group living in Azerbaijan has been unequivocally described by the Security Council and the General Assembly, as well as other authoritative international organizations, as the illegal use of force against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and as representing other egregious violations of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

As a country suffering under the occupation of part of its territory and the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of its citizens, Azerbaijan is the party with the greatest interest in arriving at a speedy negotiated settlement of the conflict and an end to its consequences. Far from sharing that interest, and taking advantage of the favourable results of the military actions, Armenia is trying to consolidate the current status quo of the occupation and ultimately impose a situation of fait accompli.

The Armenian delegation has speculated on alleged ill-treatment of Armenian soldiers on Azerbaijan's territory and on the possibility of violations by Azerbaijan of international humanitarian law. The only purpose of such speculations on the part of the Government of Armenia is to distract the attention of its population from its failures and to avoid admitting its responsibility for the crimes it has committed. As we emphasized yesterday, of the 92 military personnel whom the Armenian side officially declared killed in the recent clash, more than 80 per cent were serving members of Armenia's armed forces. The question now is what Armenian soldiers were doing on the territory of Azerbaijan. That is yet more proof of Armenia's direct involvement in the occupation of Azerbaijani territories and its effective control over them as the occupying Power.

On 9 April, the International Committee of the Red Cross facilitated the return of the remains of deceased Azerbaijani soldiers from the Armenian side. The military prosecutor's office of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the forensic medical examination registered numerous signs of ill-treatment on the soldiers' bodies, including eyes injured with blunt instruments, damaged scalps, cut ears, broken bones and ripped mouths.

The Armnian delegation has condemned Azerbaijan for acting against the investigation mechanism. Contrary to the way Armenia tries to depict Azerbaijan, my country is not against any type of investigation that can bring the truth to light. Quite the contrary, for a long time Azerbaijan has been pressing for an investigation of all violations of international law, war crimes and crimes against humanity. That is in the interests of Azerbaijan and the international community, but not of the military junta of Armenia, which is led by war criminals.

Finally, we would like to deliver the greetings of the Azerbaijani armed forces from the liberated heights of Talysh and Lalatapa, as well as Seysulan village, to the military dictatorship of Armenia.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.